

# ● impact

April 2021 | Issue 10

A Leadership Magazine

## COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

10 practical steps

## SET THEM FREE PART 2

Empowerment & remote working

## MISSING THE COMMUTE?

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A vertical wooden door with ornate carvings and a metal handle. The door is made of dark wood and features four large, oval-shaped carvings arranged vertically. Each carving has a central circular motif with radiating lines. A silver-colored metal handle is attached to the left side of the door. The background is a dark, out-of-focus interior space.

# hello

Welcome to the April issue of IMPACT.

This month we continue our article about empowerment, we outline steps to a collaborative culture, and ask the question - are you missing the commute?

We also share another of our monthly IMPACT HACKS (quick, practical tips for great impact), this time on presence.

And there's a story about what it takes to break new ground.

Enjoy the read!

Please share your thoughts on the topics by connecting via [www.2020visionleader.com](http://www.2020visionleader.com).

Thanks for reading

**Mandy Flint & Elisabet Vinberg Hearn**



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# 10 STEPS TO A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Want collaboration? Then start with the culture

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Collaboration is key to any business – so how can your business create a **Culture of Collaboration?**

## LET'S START WITH CULTURE - WHAT IS IT?

There is always a culture. Wherever you work, there will be a culture and that culture can either be left to its own devices or it can be consciously created, adjusted, tweaked or changed. You decide. Culture is always present, it never stops. If you want a culture of collaboration, then focus your attention on it and be intentional about it.

In a way culture is quite simple, it simply determines 'how things get done around here'. It is usually implicit rather than explicit and can be hard to pinpoint. It is not the 'what', it is the 'how' of business.

It is how people react, behave and interact every minute of every day. It is not something complicated or fluffy, it is something quite simple. Yes, it comes down to behaviours.

## WHY IS COLLABORATION SO IMPORTANT?

The speed of change that we are experiencing today, means that most if not all organisations will sooner or later either disrupt OR be disrupted by old or new players in the market. To disrupt is to achieve disruptive innovation, to do something that radically changes the status quo, and no one can do this on their own. This kind of disruption demands some serious collaboration.

To collaborate is a bit like bringing all the pieces together in a jigsaw. They can all fit together perfectly and if a piece is missing, the picture will be incomplete.

Everyone brings their unique piece to the jigsaw at work, and leaders do well to recognise the value of bringing all the pieces together.

## HOW DO YOU THEN BUILD A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE?

Here are 10 steps to building a Collaborative Culture, focusing on the behaviours and habits that create that culture:

Step 1: Agree on your shared purpose and direction (why you need to collaborate)

Step 2: Make sure goals are aligned and not competing with or contradicting each other

Step 3: Make it easy to collaborate – decide how to work together and how to measure success

...continued

## "WE CAN CHANGE CULTURE IF WE CHANGE BEHAVIOR"

*Dr Aubrey Daniels*

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Step 4: Take an interest in others, get to know each other to build trust

Step 5: Communicate openly and courageously – be respectfully transparent

Step 6: Generously share what you know; knowledge, skills, experience and wisdom. This is the epitome of powerful collaboration

Step 7: Listen without prejudice – let go of any need to 'be right'

Step 8: Give each other behavioural feedback – in a supportive and respectful way

Step 9: Recognise and value each person's strengths and contributions

Step 10: Commit to agreements, keep your promises, hold each other accountable

## LOOK INSIDE

And in all of this – look to yourself first. How are you behaving? Are you collaborative? Your actions and behaviours will make a big difference – people will do what you do, not what you say.

Think of yourself as a role model for the kind of collaborative culture you want to create. Everyone's behaviour shapes the culture, but the behaviours that are displayed by and accepted and even rewarded by leaders are the biggest culture shapers.

Be aware of what you are rewarding. Be intentional and say what behaviour you are rewarding, be explicit about it. Make it easy for those you work with to do the right thing.

## CREATE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Keep in mind that if you want to create a culture of collaboration, you need to first create a culture of learning; that people are allowed to learn, not needing to always 'be right'. You need to create psychological safety, where people dare speak up, dare to try, dare to challenge. It's OK to make mistakes and learn from them – it's more than OK, it's the only way we can really learn. And healthy conflict (having different opinions) is a must in a learning, innovative culture of collaboration too. If everyone is thinking the same, you could argue that no-one is thinking!

*A collaborative, innovative, psychologically safe culture happens leader by leader, minute by minute and everyone is a leader as leadership is the act and art of influencing others. What culture are you creating?*

**"COLLABORATION HAS NO HIERARCHY.  
THE SUN COLLABORATES WITH SOIL TO BRING FLOWERS ON THE EARTH."**

*Amit Ray*





# SET THEM FREE

## PART 2

### Why knowledge work and remote work need empowerment

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Following on from part 1 of SET THEM FREE (in the March issue of IMPACT), let us dive a bit deeper into the topic of empowerment at work.

As discussed last month, empowerment is a major factor for employees delivering great customer experiences. But as also mentioned last time, there are a few other reasons why it's so important, let's look at them in more detail.

#### KNOWLEDGE WORK NEEDS EMPOWERMENT

More and more companies are coming to the realisation that employees need the freedom to think for themselves, in order to find solutions to new problems. They need people's creative, original, critical thinking.

This may impact how, where and when the work gets done. Not everyone does their best thinking at the same time and place. And it's sometimes while not working that those important 'aha' moments are had, when thoughts fall into place and connect with each other to provide the solution you may have been looking for.

People often describe having their best and most creative thoughts about work while doing other things, like when they are out walking or when they are relaxing away from a work environment.

This all means that for so called 'knowledge jobs', we truly need to hire people based on their thinking capability and need to create the work setup that allows them to be at their best - individually and as part of a team - because collaborative behaviours matter greatly too.

As a leader, you need to balance individual and collective empowerment. As we often highlight, collaboration and collective intelligence is a necessity, we can achieve so much more when we bring all the clever minds and hearts together than when simply working independently side by side.

Accepting and appreciating diversity is realising that not everyone does their best thinking at the same time and place so we need to be able to flex and adapt to allow for that.

Acknowledge that different styles create more innovative thinking.

And as output and outcomes are the guides for empowerment and autonomy, they also need to be expressed at a team level. What is it that the team are expected to deliver together? And therefore, how does the empowered work setup need to look? Applying the principle of empowerment, get your team to explore and decide together how that needs to look.

When it comes to great teams, thinking through how to use synchronous and asynchronous communication is important. With different timezones people won't be available at the same time for example. How team communication is supposed to work needs to be carefully mapped out and agreed as part of the Team Charter. (for an example of a how to build a Team Charter, please check our book ["Leading Teams 10 Challenges: 10 Solutions"](#)).

....continued



And having this kind of clarity drawn up and agreed in a Team Charter is particularly important when working remotely.

## **REMOTE WORK REQUIRES EMPOWERMENT**

It's not practical nor desirable (on anyone's part) to micromanage people who work remotely, certainly not on an ongoing basis after initial setup. From an employee's perspective it can feel like you're not being trusted, which is severely demotivating.

And from a leader's perspective, it is time-consuming and demoralising, and doesn't allow people to take full responsibility.

We also need to dial up our trust in people. Ask yourself: what will make you fully trust someone to work in an empowered fashion? What needs to be in place? How will you communicate and follow up? And how can you do that while showing trust? How do you get your team members to take the lead and the ownership of keeping you up to date?

Effective empowerment should include building trust and finding ways to increase trust.

We are always working on increasing trust in our relationships at work and within our teams. There is a direct correlation between your behaviour as a leader and the level of trust with the people around you.

## **TO BUILD TRUST, HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS:**

....continued

**“IT’S NOT THE TOOLS YOU HAVE FAITH IN – TOOLS ARE JUST TOOLS – THEY WORK, OR THEY DON’T WORK. IT’S THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE FAITH IN OR NOT.”**

*Steve Jobs*





- Encourage your team members to talk, by listening and showing interest
- Disclosure breeds disclosure which leads to greater openness, so show courage and share more
- Spend time getting to know each other, showing empathy while getting to know each other changes the relationships and opens up dialogue, a dialogue that might not have happened otherwise

- Keep promises. Promise is an emotional word and hits you at an emotional level. There is nothing as powerful as a promise kept, being trustworthy. And a promise broken breaks trust. Either way it affects trust at the core level

To be empowering to others you need to feel empowered. There is a chain reaction with empowerment,

what you feel and think about your own empowerment comes out in your behaviours and inspires others or demotivates them, depending on your behaviour.

How empowered do you feel and what level of empowerment are you creating? Whatever it is make a commitment to turn up the dial on empowerment right now. It will have a big impact.

**“GIVING EMPLOYEES GREAT AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY ALLOWS PEOPLE TO FEEL INDEPENDENT AND EMPOWERED WHILE STILL FEELING LIKE A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER. THIS LEADS TO HAPPY, LOYAL EMPLOYEES WITH A RICH QUALITY OF LIFE, WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO AN AMAZING CULTURE.”**

*Larry English*







# MISSING THE COMMUTE?

The commute can have real benefits.  
Here's how to recreate them

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

About a year ago, as the pandemic spread around the world, a large number of people were asked or told to work from home.

After the initial struggle of making remote working work, practically with tools and connections, a majority of people were quite pleased with working from home. Some of the benefits often quoted were:

- It saves me a lot of time, not having to travel to the office
- I can spend more time with my family
- I don't need to squeeze into packed commuter trains, worrying if I will be able to secure a seat today or have to stand the whole way
- I can exercise more easily
- I can go for a walk in the morning, at lunchtime or after work
- My insight into my children's school work is growing

- As a team, we have focused on solving a crisis, and that's a great team building force

Yes, the benefits of working from home have for many been plentiful.

But over time, other feelings have crept up on us too. Some express a sense of monotony, "groundhog day", Zoom fatigue and missing the community of a workplace, to mention but a few.

And there are even those who have noticed that they miss the commute! Which, if someone would have suggested a year ago that they would, might have sounded incredulous. But there it is. For many it's become true.

A realisation has been that the actual commute, other than taking you to and from work, has other purposes too.

Maybe not always intentional, but none the less real and practical.

Regardless of what means you commute by, the process itself can provide an opportunity for

- personal alone time
- reflection
- relaxation
- reading
- listening
- learning
- planning
- preparation for the working day
- evaluation of the working day
- ideas and insights
- simply being

And when looking at it that way, the opportunities that arise from that commute become apparent.

...continued

**"YOU LEARN SOMETHING EVERY DAY IF YOU PAY ATTENTION."**

*Ray LeBlond*



Some people also express that the commute allows them to have a cleaner break between work life and personal life - as 'working from home' can easily become 'living at work' where it's hard to switch off work.

But this is not to say that you have to commute to achieve the benefits of what the commute time/process make possible.

All those things can also be achieved if you don't commute, but you need to find a new way of doing it.

**Here are some ideas for how to recreate the experienced benefits of the commute, if you're missing them.**

- Block at least some of your old commuting time at the beginning and end of day for a new remote/virtual 'commute'.
- Start and finish your working day with a walk or bike ride, to create a sense of moving from home to work and back again. Maybe have a set route that you can travel each day to recreate that sense of daily repetition.
- On your 'commute', do the things you would do on your old commute - like picking up a coffee, reflecting, listening, mentally preparing for or wrapping up the day. Use your phone to record your thoughts, insights and commitments so that you can access them later.
- Use some of the time you previously spent on your commute for focused learning; follow a podcast on developments in your industry or profession, read a business book chapter each day, join an online course or business network with asynchronous communication that allows you to participate when it suits you.
- Or simply allow yourself to just be; to have your thoughts float away, observing the world around you, allowing yourself to be inspired. You never know what great insights and ideas you might have. The brain is powerful; our best thinking often comes when we don't try to consciously think but allow our subconscious to connect the dots.

## "EVERY SECOND IS OF INFINITE VALUE"

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*





**IF YOU TRACK YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CREATIVITY BY THE NUMBER OF BRAINSTORMS ON YOUR CALENDAR, YOU'RE MISSING OUT. IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO CAPTURE THOSE UNPLANNED SPARKS OF INSPIRATION THAT SO OFTEN COME WHEN WE'RE COOKING DINNER, TAKING A SHOWER, OR COMMUTING TO WORK.**

*Charles Best*





# A STORY: BREAKING NEW GROUND

A story about reframing and non-stop learning

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

*There was a team who were breaking new ground in the work they were carrying out.*

*Everything they did was new and no one else had previously done it. They were not attached to the activities they were implementing or carrying out. They simply kept trying new things to create greater results.*

*The reputation they had was that they were very successful and everything they did was seen as a positive step forward.*

*People even quoted them as a team that pretty much got it right all the time. They were highly respected.*

*They didn't get it right each time though.*

*It was just the way they reframed it when it didn't go the right way, which made it look that way.*

*The team knew they had to break new ground and to do that they would have to make some errors along the way. They only saw those errors as learning opportunities and the learning helped them to get it right.*

*They were both positive and realistic, which made people feel connected to them and what they were trying to achieve. This translated into them being seen as highly successful. And they were, but only because they dared to try things and not get beaten down by setbacks on the way.*

**"THE TRUE SIGN OF INTELLIGENCE IS NOT KNOWLEDGE BUT IMAGINATION"**

*Albert Einstein*





## ANALYSIS

We can of course all learn something new every day. There is great power in taking learning from a situation and making it into a better solution. This is the power of reframing; simply seeing all results as learning, by using the perspective of curiosity.

Like in this story, each team member can learn to not be defensive about ideas or attached to outcomes. Everyone can reframe outcomes and results. Reframing is also an excellent way of being seen as delivering, as it helps other people to experience the positive way forward.

A team who builds a culture of reframing can do so simply by seeing things differently and communicating that each stage is a learning to take you to something better, something even greater.

This story reminds us that reframing is something we can do each day, taking on board all the learnings, focusing on talking about what we need to reframe or learn from - and moving forward. Each result is simply feedback - or even feedforward. And it creates a much needed culture of learning, where we can be 'learn-it-alls' instead of thinking we need to be 'know-it-alls'.

**"THE PESSIMIST SEES DIFFICULTY IN EVERY OPPORTUNITY.  
THE OPTIMIST SEES THE OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY DIFFICULTY."**

*Winston Churchill*

This story and abbreviated analysis is an excerpt from "Leading Teams 10 Challenges: 10 Solutions", Financial Times Publishing 2015





# IMPACT HACK #4 PRESENCE

**5 proven hacks  
for dialling up  
your presence impact**

**BY MANDY FLINT &  
ELISABET VINBERG HEARN**

Your impact is how you show up, which is why **HOW** you are present when with others is worth your focus. Being 100% present honours the time of those you are with - as well as your own.

Here are 5 quick impact hacks to consider, to be truly present in each encounter, face to face, on video or on the phone:

## **MINIMISE DISTRACTIONS**

Switch off the phone, email notifications and other possible distractions. Not only are you showing your commitment to the conversation or meeting but you also allow yourself to be fully engaged and not missing out on important content of the interaction.

## **BE INTERESTED**

Make a decision to take a real interest in the conversation. You are there anyway, so why not make it count. Look for the angles that you can authentically connect with and contribute to.

## **ASK QUESTIONS**

When possible, prepare by thinking of questions you want to ask. And/or listen well in the moment, to then ask relevant questions that engages others and reflects your interest and focus.

## **MANAGE YOUR STATE**

Think about your energy levels, turn up your energy if you are feeling tired.

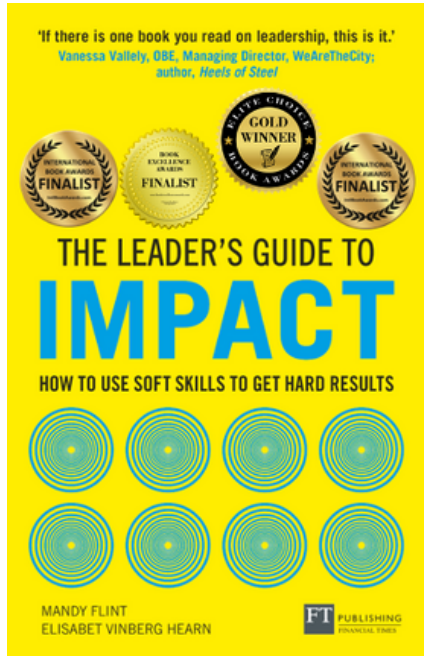
Choose your mood, don't let circumstances dictate your state of mind and the ripple effect you create.

## **BE AUTHENTIC**

Do the things listed above, but do it your way. You are best when you are you.



# CHECK OUT OUR AWARD-WINNING BOOKS ON LEADERSHIP



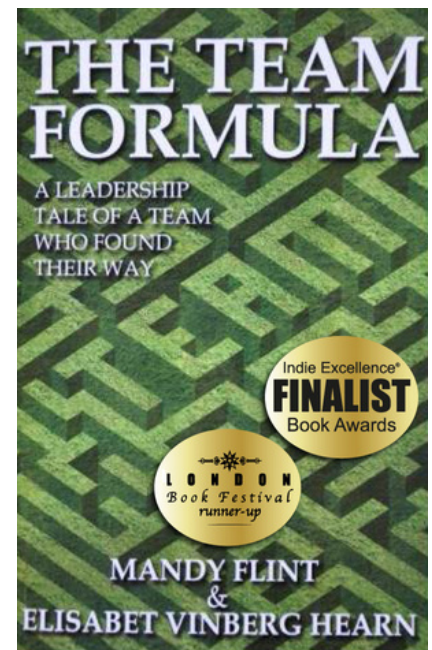
**"A COMPELLING READ FOR THESE DISRUPTIVE TIMES"**

*Amazon reader review*



**"THIS BOOK IS A 21ST CENTURY GUIDE ON HOW TO BUILD A WORLD-CLASS TEAM"**

*Amazon reader review*



**"IT IS THE BEST BUSINESS BOOK I HAVE READ THIS YEAR, HANDS DOWN"**

*Amazon reader review*

**"I THINK BOOKS ARE LIKE PEOPLE, IN THE SENSE THAT THEY'LL TURN UP IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU MOST NEED THEM."**

*Emma Thompson*





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